

Victory Heights Community Council Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2014

Meeting called to order by Treasurer Brad Cummings at 7:03 PM. Twenty-five people in attendance.

Everyone introduced themselves, we had neighbors who have lived in Victory Heights over 50 years to one who moved in last Saturday!

Elizabeth Scott, the Crime Prevention Coordinator with the North Precinct of the Seattle Police Department (SPD) gave a presentation. She started in March 2014 and is still getting to know our precinct's sector (Lincoln2). She spoke about preventing burglaries and car prowls, saying burglaries are most common during the day, and in summer months, and thieves usually are in and out of your house in under nine minutes. In comparing the crime statistics for our sector between August 17 and November 17 from 2013 to 2014, there has been a slight decrease in burglaries (however, car thefts have increased since last year). She advised us to lock up ladders and other tools which are outside that might aid a burglar in accessing your home. Put dowels in windows. Keep shrubs under 3 feet so they don't obscure windows (in conjunction with your acceptable level of privacy). During vacations have a neighbor check your house, pick up newspaper, packages, etc. Make it lived in, use timers, etc. At this point a neighbor wanted to know why his house had been broken in twice (once seven years ago, and again two years ago) and he had received a less than helpful response from the detective, even when he had found his stolen items on Craigslist and knew the thief's real name. The neighbor contended that instead of responding to robberies in progress (his view), the police instead were sitting parked in their cars for hours doing nothing apparently. Elizabeth is not a spokesman for the police and can't address policy decisions, but said burglaries are often lower priority than other crimes, and "There are limitations to what we can do." And often when they are sitting in their cars they are filing reports while still keeping an eye on the neighborhood rather than being back at the precinct sitting behind a desk. The recent incidents that were reported in The Seattle Times were brought up, and Elizabeth responded that the new police chief is looking into how better officers can respond. On the issue of homeless encampments, she said if we see one (three tent minimum) to call 684-CITY to report it. If it's on private property, the city will talk to the owners about fixing the problem. If it's on land managed by a specific city agency, that agency will be contacted and expected to follow up with the people involved and move them on. That same number can be used to report abandoned cars (often stolen cars are just used by joyriders and left on the side of the road). Currently Hondas, Toyotas and Subarus from the 1990s are the most likely victims of theft due to how easy they are to steal. The "Find It Fix It" app (available for iPhone & Android, sorry Microsoft users) will easily allow residents to quickly report abandoned cars, potholes, and graffiti to the city while you are on the go. There are police scanner apps as well if you want to listen to the SPD radio, and the Lincoln2 Twitter feed. If you register your cellphone at Smart911.com with your information, when you call 911 it will know who you are and your home address, which might prove vital in an emergency.

Brad updated the latest meeting of the North District Council. Currently they are dealing with a "splinter" homeless encampment that sprung up in Homeacres Park, looking for funding to refurbish the

Lake City Community Center, and revising the sign code to cover electronic signs (although due to Grandfather Clauses, nothing can be done about the existing ones). At the meeting, Molly Burke reported the Lake City Farmers Market was successful this year and will return in 2015.

A brief discussion about pedestrian safety and cars going too fast ensued. The speed limit throughout the neighborhood is 25 mph and the traffic islands are meant for “traffic calming” and slowing cars down, they do not operate as roundabouts. Pedestrians should be visible and wear reflectors, and they aren’t a bad idea on your pets as you walk them either.

Old Business: After our last meeting some questions were raised about our continuing to use the Co-op Preschool building for meetings and at one point this looked to be in jeopardy due to concerns from some of the parents. However, thanks to the heroic efforts of Robin Lesh and Monica Harris, this issue has been resolved and we can continue to use the building (although Christa Dumpy with the City’s Department of Neighborhoods says we may have to sign waivers or something to avoid liability issues). In an e-mail, Robin wrote,

I also wanted to provide an update about the Victory Heights Community Council (VHCC) meetings. At the fall ASB meeting, concerns were raised about the permission and liability of VHCC continuing to meet at the building that the VH Co-Op preschool rents from Seattle Parks.

I have since contacted the Parks department, Betty Williams at NSC (program coordinator for co-op & Parent Ed. through the college), the Victory Heights Community Council and the City’s Department of Neighborhoods. Through several conversations, I have learned the following:

- Per Rita Holomon, our main contact with Seattle Parks: VHCC does in fact have permission to meet at the building. This community group historically met at the building, which was once a community center before the preschool began renting the building; Parks considers the matter set through precedent. I am told it was also once a voting site and classroom items were moved to make room for voting booths.
- Per Betty Williams, Co-op & Parent Ed Program Coordinator at North Seattle College: VHCC does have permission to use the building as long as (1) it is not during preschool classroom program hours and (2) that our program materials and personal information are secured. These requirements are currently met through Teacher Monica attending each VHCC meeting and securing each class file box. The procedure is as follows: Monica unlocks the main entrance just prior to the start of the meeting and locks it after the meeting has concluded and everyone has exited (approximately 1.5 hours). She will continue to lock away class file boxes that contain personal information in the closet. Ms. Williams expressed that it is in the cooperative spirit for Victory Heights to continue supporting the community council, working as partners with them to improve the community for all. As an example, this cooperative spirit is demonstrated in other co-ops renting space from organizations

(i.e. churches), and those organizations sometimes continue to access and use the space outside of the hours it is used by a preschool.

- Per Ardith Lupton, current Chair of the VHCC: I shared the concerns the ASB raised about open community meetings at the school's location and the risk it poses to both groups. Both Ardith and I have made several attempts to contact the City's Department of Neighborhoods, specifically coordinator Christa Dumpys who works with the north district council and its affiliate neighborhood groups of which the VHCC is one. Ardith's hope is to secure a certificate or statement of coverage through the Department of Neighborhoods that would cover the VHCC, the Preschool, NSC and Parks. This statement has not yet been secured but VHCC hopes to provide this soon.

In the meantime, I have asked Seattle Parks to provide the Preschool with a Hold Harmless agreement that can be used at each VHCC meeting for all attendees (possibly as a sign-in sheet) to jointly cover the facility and owner (Seattle Parks) and its tenants (Victory Heights Cooperative Preschool and North Seattle College) and users (VHCC). If there are any sample Hold Harmless agreements that anyone in our group would like to offer or recommend, please forward them to me and I will present them to Parks and VHCC.

Many thanks to all who shared their thoughts on this issue. It is my hope that this solution will foster security and a sense of mutual support for all involved.

Emergency planning committee: Keith Dekker and Sharon Haggerty are still looking for block captains.

New Business: Do we need to hold elections per the by-laws? Here is what they have to say about the matter:

Regular Elections: Members of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by a majority of the membership attending the Council meeting. Only residents of Victory Heights may be Trustees.

- a. **Terms of Office:** Trustees shall be elected for a term of two years.
- b. **Filling Vacancies:** Vacant positions shall be filled for the remainder of the period until the regular election date by election by a majority of the membership attending the first VHCC meeting following the vacancy.
- c. **Attendance:** If a Trustee misses three (3) consecutive scheduled Board of Trustees' meetings, the position shall be considered vacated.

- d. Number and Quorum: The Board of Trustees shall consist of no more than 15 members nor less than the minimum quorum. A quorum at a Board of Trustees meeting shall be five (5) or 51%, whichever is greater.

Someone (probably me) should probably be keeping track of the board members who attend meetings. Per article c, some may not be eligible now to be board members. The last election was held on January 15, 2013, which means we should probably be scheduling elections for January 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Submitted by Ryan Johnson, secretary of Victory Heights Community Council